

LRE Foundation



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

To remember the past is to create a better future

Foreword

PAGE.....04-05

Liberation Route Europe

PAGE.....06-21

Europe Remembers

PAGE.....22-25

Projects & Events

PAGE.....26-30

Press & PR

PAGE.....31-33

Travel Trade

PAGE.....34-35

LRE Network

PAGE.....36-41

Preview 2024

PAGE.....42-43

Organisation & Team

PAGE.....44-49

Foreword

“As we move forward to 2024, let us carry the lessons of the past into the future, with our continued dedication to remembrance, education, and cooperation. Together, we are not just preserving history; we are shaping a future that remembers, better understands its past, and strives for peace.”



As we reflect on the past year and look towards the future, it is with great pride that we first recognize the outstanding achievements of the Liberation Route Europe project, with a very significant growth in content and itineraries offered to hikers, cyclists, and anyone interested in WWII history.

The commitment and trust of our growing network have not only brought new members and countries into the LRE mission but also reinforced our collective dedication to remembrance and education.

Our annual LRE Forum stands as a milestone for this community, offering a momentous occasion to celebrate our shared successes and the expanding scope of our mission.

The launch of the Europe Remembers campaign in 2023, commemorating the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, marked a pivotal moment in the year. This initiative serves as a bridge to connect past and present generations. As we anticipate the campaign's further development in 2024, we are reminded of the enduring importance of our work in keeping the memory of those times alive, especially in the turmoil of the world we live in. Remembrance and memory transmission are more important than ever as an essential responsibility.

A particular highlight of the year has been the development of the LRE Youth Programme, including the impactful 'Through Their Eyes' projects. These initiatives have provided invaluable perspectives on the war, fostering a deeper understanding among young people. The upcoming LRE Active Remembrance Youth Programme, along with youth exchanges across Europe, promises to further this engagement, empowering the next generation to carry forward the torch of memory.

None of this would have been possible without the unwavering support of our members, partners, funders, and the dedicated efforts of our boards and team. This support fuels our mission and ensures the legacy of our organization and projects continues to grow and inspire many more.

As we move forward to 2024, let us carry the lessons of the past into the future, with our continued dedication to remembrance, education, and cooperation. Together, we are not just preserving history; we are shaping a future that remembers, better understands its past, and strives for peace.

Rémi Praud - Managing Director



Liberation Route Europe



General Update

In 2023, the development of the LRE international trails continued. Following the successful introduction in 2022 of the “themed routes” concept, this year saw the addition of many more of these across the network: 14 in the Netherlands, 10 in Italy, 1 in Guernsey, 4 in Belgium, 3 in Czechia and 2 in France and several in Luxembourg, with more to come. Additionally, more Vectors of Memory by architect Daniel Libeskind were installed in Belgium, France and the Netherlands.

Another key development in the Liberation Route Europe network took place this year with the introduction of the first LRE cycling routes. These were piloted in the Netherlands and will be added to complement the existing hiking trails throughout Europe to enable visitors to cycle in the footsteps of history!

Cultural Route of the Council of Europe

Liberation Route Europe became a certified Cultural Route of the Council of Europe in 2019, and in 2022 underwent its 3-year recertification process. In March 2023, it received an extremely positive assessment, following an assessor’s visit to parts of the route in 2022, and was described as it as “well managed and on a solid development pathway, fully addressing all requirements for the Regular Evaluation as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe”. In May, the LREF team presented the LRE in Luxembourg in front of the member States of the Governing Board of the Cultural Routes. Following this, the LRE was successfully recertified whilst attending the Cultural Routes Annual Forum in September in Łódź, Poland, a 3-day programme of workshops, panel discussions and networking sessions.

NEW THEMED ROUTES



A themed route is a ready-to-walk or ready-to-bike itinerary following a collection of POIs and stories linked together by a common theme. Themed Routes can be short local hikes around a specific area but can also be long distance ones by bike following the movement of the troops during an important battle of the liberation of Europe. Themed routes are often created in cooperation with local partners and governments.

+14
THE NETHERLANDS

+10
ITALY

+4
BELGIUM

+3
CZECHIA

+2
FRANCE

+1
GUERSNEY



JANUARY

Kick-off LRE
Cycling Routes

MARCH

Outreach events
throughout Europe

APRIL

Launch of
Canadian Trail in
Friesland

MAY

Two press trips
to promote
Liberation Route
Europe in England,
Normandy, Jersey,
Luxembourg and
Belgium

JUNE

Launch of the
Canadian Trail in
Drenthe

Launch of new
themed routes in
Italy

JULY

Launch of the
Market Garden
Cycling Route

AUGUST

Launch of the
Saint-Raphaël
Memory Trail
themed route in
Provence

NOVEMBER

Themed Routes
unveiled in Pilsen,
Czechia

DECEMBER

Youth event in
Bastogne and
launch of the new
podcast series "In
the Footsteps of
History"

DECEMBER

New Vectors of
Memory and themed
routes around the
Battle of the Bulge

In 2023 the LRE trails network continued to grow. Several cycling routes have been introduced and the thematic routes section was expanded, covering different parts of Europe. Trails have been created along the beaches of Normandy, in the Belgian Ardennes and in the city of Pilsen. Hundreds of new points of interest have been added to the website, making more history available to a broader audience. The network will continue to grow in 2024, with exciting new trails and content coming up.



Germany

In 2023, a project was launched in North-Rhine Westfalia to develop 10 new audio spots. This enables the telling of new stories from the end of the Second World War, between Emmerich and Roetgen. Work also continues on the realisation of hiking trails in Peenemünde, on the Elbe, in Berlin, in the Eifel and on the Lower Rhine.

Poland

The Liberation Route Europe project is also planned to reach Poland, and the country has a growing potential to establish an LRE branch there. In 2023, the first outreach event in Poland took place on 16 March, hosted by the Home Army Museum in Krakow. Local and regional authorities and institutions from Krakow and other cities were present, and the LRE project was presented and discussed to encourage cooperation on expanding the route into Poland, with trails and Vectors of Memory. This was a critical step in involving stakeholders in the development of the upcoming LRE branch.

France

2023 marked a major step forward in the development of the Liberation Route trails in France. Thanks in particular to the support of the French Ministry of the Armed Forces and the French Ministry of Culture, work has begun on defining the routes in the Normandy, Hauts-de-France and Grand-Est regions. 65 new content items have been added, communication campaigns have been carried out, and France's first themed routes have been created. «Along the D-Day landing beaches» is a 156km themed route with 26 points of interest following the story of the Normandy Landings along coastal paths identified by FFRandonnée. «Saint-Raphaël Memory trail» themed route, developed with the town of Saint-Raphaël, is made up of 10 points of interest telling the story of the Provence Landings. 10 floor Vectors of Memory will be installed along the route, the first vectors to be installed in France! Additionally, in April an outreach event was organised in La Coupole to present the project and integrate partners in the Hauts de France region. The arrival of new members over the course of the year has confirmed the willingness of French remembrance territories to be part of this cultural route and offers the prospect of many new developments in 2024.

Luxembourg

2023 saw the realisation of an important expansion to the hiking trails network in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism in Luxembourg. This partnership enabled us to add a new hiking trail which runs the length of the country, accompanied by 67 items of content highlighting the rich history in the area. The trail has been waymarked along the entire route by the Ministry, using visuals based on the Vectors of Memory design. Several themed routes are also incorporated into the Luxembourg trails network. This new addition to the European network forms an important bridge to neighbouring countries, linking with existing routes in the Bastogne and Ourthe areas in Belgium, as well as future routes in Germany and France. The Luxembourg trails will be inaugurated in 2024.



Belgium

Following on from the additions to the LRE around Bastogne last year, 2023 saw further development of the route in Belgium thanks to support from the US Embassy in Brussels. The LRE Foundation worked with partners to develop nearly 100 new sites and stories across Wallonia: in the city of Mons, in Leopoldsburg, and across the rural Ardennes areas into East Belgium. More themed routes will be added soon to connect the new content, which explores the role of the US Army in Wallonia during the Battle of the Bulge, with enjoyable walking routes in the beautiful Wallonia region. Vectors of Memory are also being installed along the route.



Hiking Route Leopoldsburg (Flanders)

Since spring 2023, Vectors of Memory can also be seen in Leopoldsburg. They mark historical places on the new themed hiking route "WWII in Leopoldsburg". Starting at Liberation Garden museum, walkers can learn about the Second World War in the former garrison town. The 9km route explores Prison Camp K34, the Belgian and British war cemeteries, and Cinema Splendid, among others.

Leopoldsburg becomes an increasingly important anchor point on the international Liberation Route Europe. Not only is there now a themed walking route of local war history, but Liberation Garden has also become the starting point of the popular "Operation Market Garden" themed route. Walkers and cyclists can follow the 1944 route of the Allied troops from Leopoldsburg to the end point of the 'bridge too far' in Arnhem.

United Kingdom

In 2023 development of the LRE hiking trails UK network continued, with 61 new points of interest added to the LRE website and app. This content accompanies the extension of the UK national route, in Hampshire (south) and Lincolnshire (north). Themed routes are also in development to explore the rich Second World War history in both these areas, alongside additional historical content. Outreach events were held to engage with key stakeholders and encourage cooperation around the LRE trails project. These took place in Portsmouth in January (hosted by Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and D-Day Story), Lincoln in February (hosted By International Bomber Command Centre), and London in March (hosted by Churchill War Rooms) and were met with great enthusiasm. In the Channel Islands, 2023 has seen the initial development of new themed routes in both Jersey and Guernsey, exploring the liberation of the islands from Nazi Occupation.

Italy

Thanks to the funding of the German Embassy in Rome received in 2022, in 2023 LRE Italy were able to upload dozens of Themed Routes and hundreds of POIs on the LRE website. This enriched the trails network with many Italian itineraries, stories and biographies. Three Outreach events were organised in Florence, Bologna and Rome, in collaboration with Region Tuscany, Emilia Romagna and Shoah Foundation of Rome. The development of a physical hiking route that unites the two most symbolic places of the Italian civil Resistance, Sant'Anna di Stazzema and Montesole, is one of the main projects that LRE Italy is currently working on, in collaboration with the Emilia Romagna and Tuscany Regions and numerous municipalities, who are members of the network.

Czechia

In Czechia, the country's first themed routes have been developed in cooperation with the city of Pilsen: "Liberation of Pilsen", "Pilsen Uprising", and "Civilian Experience in Pilsen". These routes explore the city's Second World War history, looking at the important role of the local Resistance, the impact of the Nazi Occupation on civilians, and role of US soldiers in the liberation from the Nazi regime. The routes allow visitors to explore the city on foot, discovering Pilsen's sites and stories along the way.





The Netherlands

Canada's role in the liberation of the Netherlands has long been underexposed: more than half of the Netherlands was liberated by Canadian troops, who also paid a heavy price for it. To emphasise this, LREF is working on the walking route "In the Footsteps of the Canadian Liberators". This follows the trail of the Canadian forces throughout the country, from Zeeland in the southwest, to Groningen in the northeast.

As its first component, the Canadian Trail Friesland was launched on 15 April: a day marking exactly 78 years since Canadian troops liberated Leeuwarden, capital of the Friesland province. A delegation from the Royal Canadian Dragoons witnessed the unveiling and adoption of a Crossroads Vector of Memory by primary school pupils. A 250km walking route, 10 shorter walks, and many Vectors of Memory make Friesland's Second World War past visible and possible to experience from various perspectives.

Two months later, the 175km Canadian Trail Drenthe followed. To keep the memory of the liberation alive and pass it on to the next generations, a commemoration ceremony, the unveiling of a Crossroads Vector of Memory, and the launch of a long-distance walking route and 4 shorter walks commemorated our life in freedom. Along the way, dozens of stories and Vectors of Memory tell the liberation story of Drenthe and the role of the Canadians in this. A primary school adopted the Crossroads Vector of Memory in the village of Hooghalen and will reflect on it with pupils every year.

In December, the Crossroads Vector of Memory in Appingedam was unveiled, where the Canadian Trail Groningen has also been officially launched. The 135km trail connects 75 stories and 10 new audio spots, focusing on the heavy battles for the city of Groningen and the so-called Delfzijl Pocket.

In spring 2024, the entire national route "In the Footsteps of the Canadian Liberators" will be presented. It will then be possible to walk right across the Netherlands, from Retranchement in Zeeland, to Delfzijl in the far north of the Netherlands. Dozens of stories and Vectors of Memory along the way mark historical sites and recall the battle Canadian troops fought for the freedom of the Netherlands. Meanwhile, initiatives have also been launched for local walking routes that tell regional war stories. Such routes will be launched in Achterhoek, Veluwe, Rivierenland and Overbetuwe in 2024.

The development of Liberation Route Europe was made possible with the cooperation and support of the following hiking organisations across Europe:



Cycling Route Planner & Cycling Routes

The Liberation Route Europe hiking trails network has developed to a unique transnational memorial stretching 10,000 km and tracing the Allies' advance to liberate Europe during World War II. In 2023, further development of the LRE route planner was started, to enable cycling routes as well. With financial support from Dutch vfonds, the route planner, website and app were adapted, and the first pilot cycling routes were published. Most notable is the Market Garden cycling route, following the success of the Market Garden themed hiking trail which was created in collaboration with Bart Verhulst from www.marketgarden.cc.

Stretching from Leopoldsburg, Belgium, to the renowned "Bridge Too Far" in Arnhem, the Netherlands, the Market Garden route is filled with sites telling the stories of one of the largest Allied operations of the Second World War. Along the way, cyclists can encounter monuments, cemeteries, landmarks, audio stories, and remembrance sites. The total length of the route is 240km and it can be cycled in multiple stages. Beginning at the Liberation Garden Museum, the route follows the cycling knots system, enabling easy offline navigation while ensuring cyclists pass through picturesque landscapes and traverse peaceful roads.

To test the new cycle route planner, cycle routes in Limburg, North Brabant and the Rijk van Nijmegen have been added to the online platform. These include the popular cycling route "On the Other Side" which passes alongside the German War Cemetery in Ysselsteyn and even through the War Museum in Overloon.

More cycling routes across the Netherlands will follow in 2024. For example, the national route "In the Tracks of the Polish Liberators", which focuses on the suffering that war causes for ordinary people. Regional cycling routes will also be added in the Rivierengebied, Overbetuwe and the Betuwe, among others, with many stories and Vectors of Memory marking historical sites along the way.



Vectors Installed

In 2022 the first Vectors of Memory were installed along the Liberation Route Europe. A unique family of trail markers in four different sizes and designed by architect Daniel Libeskind, these indicate the route and highlight important sites and stories along the way. In 2023, Vectors of Memory were distributed to members and partners and installed across France, Belgium and the Netherlands. The first Vectors of Memory to be installed in France are being placed along the route in Saint Raphaël. Additionally, in Bastogne, Belgium, several Wall Vectors of Memory were installed at the Bastogne War Museum, Bastogne City Hall, 101st Airborne Museum and Bastogne Barracks respectively. In the Netherlands several Crossroad Vectors, Wall Vectors and Floor Vectors have been installed, both along the Hiking and the Cycling trails, but also outside of the trails, to highlight specific places.

An impressive number of Vectors have been spread out over Europe, since many provinces and municipalities understood the value of marking their war heritage.

660 Floor Vectors

48 Wall Vectors

14 Crossroad Vectors

1 Remembrance Site Vectors



The New Liberation Route Europe Podcast – “In the Footsteps of History”



In 2023, the LRE Foundation continued its collaboration with the French audio production company natif. to create a podcast series as part of the Liberation Route Europe project. Thanks to this partnership and the support of the LRE network, a proof of concept has been realised, along with the production of the first five episodes of the series.

The Liberation Route Europe podcast, titled “In the Footsteps of History,” is designed to enhance the visitor experience along the Liberation Route Europe, guiding listeners on a journey where they can immerse themselves in the paths of liberation and discover WWII remembrance sites across Europe. The podcast serves as a companion along the route and an immersive documentary when listened to at home

The initial episodes of the series, focusing on the Battle of Bastogne, utilise a rich soundtrack to narrate the wartime experiences in diverse formats. Listeners are taken to Bastogne and some of its many WWII sites, exploring the war through interviews with historians and eyewitnesses, as well as extracts from letters and personal stories of the war.



Listen to the Podcast!



Throughout 2023, various partners, regional authorities, and governments have decided to support the realisation of the Liberation Route hiking trails.

Grants from the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany – The Hague & Rome

The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany has been supporting the development of the Liberation Route Europe hiking trails project since 2020. Thanks to support received in 2022, in 2023 multiple outreach events took place in Belgium, Northern France, Poland, Germany, Netherlands and England, to raise awareness to the hiking trails network and expand membership.



US Embassy in Brussels

In 2023, funding from the US Embassy in Brussels enabled the creation of new routes and historical content across Belgium. The sites and stories highlight the involvement of the US Army during the Battle of the Bulge in the winter of 1944 to 45, and are located in Mons, Leopoldsburg, Bastogne, and other areas of the Belgian Ardennes and East Belgium. Both Floor and Wall Vectors of Memory have been installed along these routes. The project was officially presented in December in Bastogne, with the Ambassador of the United States to Belgium, the Mayor of Bastogne, and local press in attendance to unveil the Wall vector located at the Bastogne City Hall.



Vfonds

Thanks to the financial support of the Vfonds (Dutch Foundation for Peace, Freedom and Veteran Support), the LRE Foundation, in corporation with dozens of partners, launched the first parts of the 'Canadian Route' that crosses the Netherlands from the south to the north and tells the often underexposed story of the Canadian liberators. Development of the new cycling route planner was supported by Vfonds as well. Further development of the 'Canadian Trail' and other routes will take place in 2024.



National Lottery Belgium

Thanks to funding from the National Lottery in Belgium, in 2022 work started on developing new themed routes in all parts of Belgium. This includes further developments of the website and application, addition of new content and themed routes, and communication tools. The new additions will be launched in 2023.



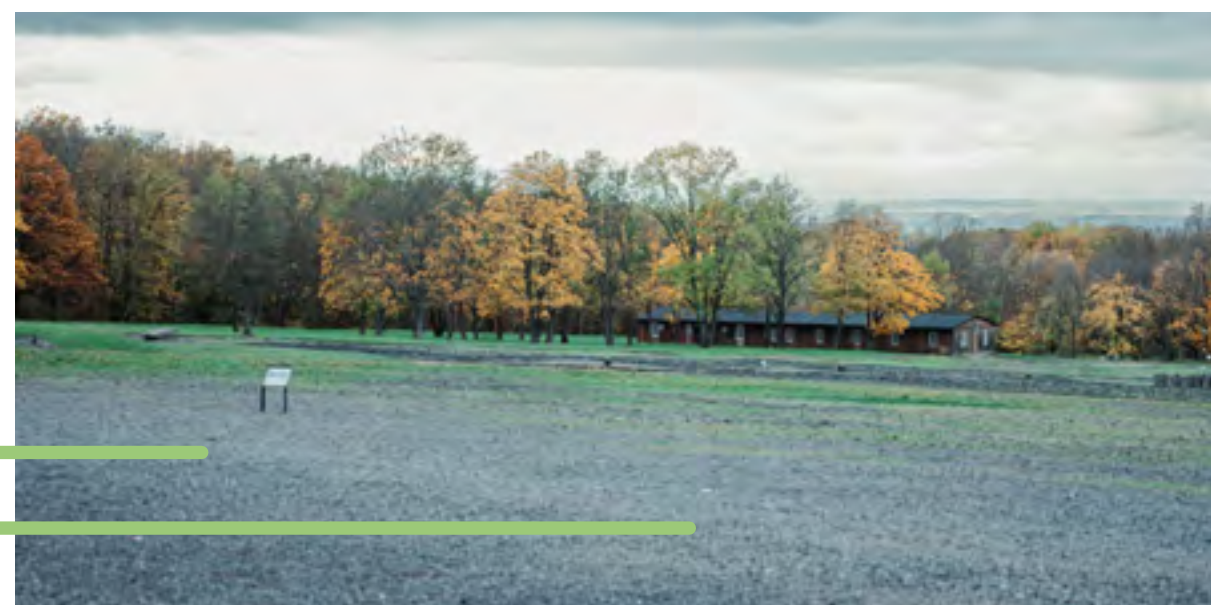
The Ministry of Tourism Luxembourg

In 2023, LREF worked with The Ministry of Economy and its directorate general for tourism to develop the trails concept in the Grand Duchy. A national route was created along with some themed routes, to combine stories about the liberation of the country in September 1944 and the Battle of the Bulge of the winter 1944 to 1945, the second occupation and liberation.



French Ministries of the Armed Forces and Culture

In 2023 LRE France received support from the French Ministry of the Armed Forces and the French Ministry of Culture. This enabled the initial development of the Liberation Route France in the Normandy, Hauts-de-France and Grand-Est regions of the country, including new historical content, routes and Vectors of Memory.

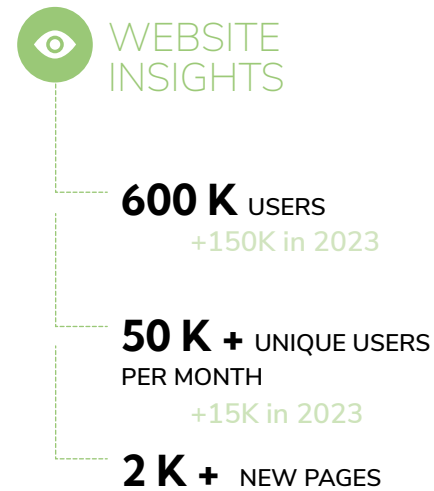


Website



Launched in May 2021, this innovative website presents more than two thousand locations and stories in six languages (English, French, Dutch, German, Polish, and Italian).

The Liberation Route Europe Website received 600.000 unique users and was more than 3 million page views in 2023. More than 2000 people registered for the Liberation Route Europe website and mobile app while 43 new themed routes were added to our offer.



Newsletter

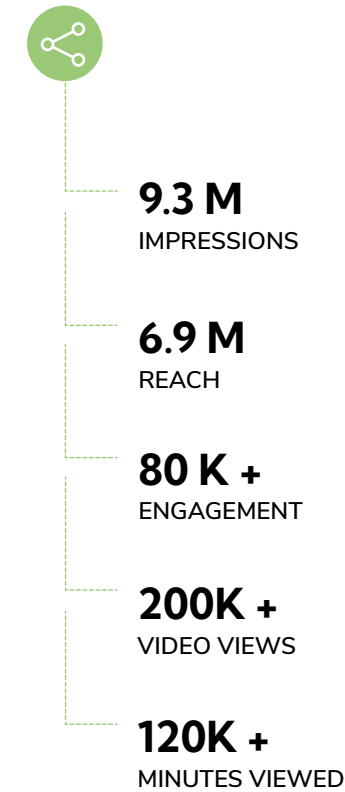
The Liberation Route Europe Newsletter is a regular appointment for all the people interested in WWII history and sustainable tourism, including members and partners within our network. It serves as a perfect channel for presenting both new and established hiking and cycling trails, historical sites and stories. Each newsletter is centered around a specific topic, ranging from anniversaries and historical themes to thematic routes. In the past year, our focus encompassed diverse topics such as the Childs' perspective of WWII, Women's History Month, D-Day, and Operation Market Garden, among others.



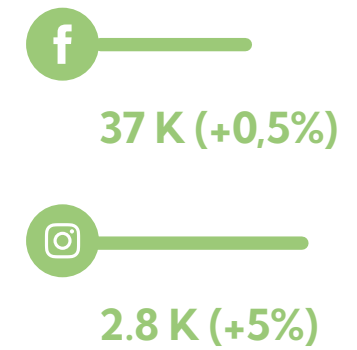
Social Media

The Liberation Route Europe social media are used to promote the route and to inform our followers on a weekly basis. Communications campaigns are carried out to spotlight new content on the website and inform the public about launches of themed routes. On our channels we showcase various WWII stories, museums, remembrance sites, and points of interest throughout Europe, by sharing videos, pictures and information about our members and partners.

SOCIAL MEDIA INSIGHTS 2023

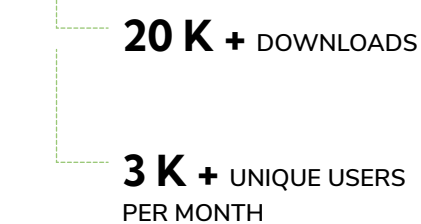


SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS



Application

APPLICATION INSIGHTS



Following the launch of the mobile app in April (Android) and June 2022 (iOS), more than 20.000 people downloaded and used the app. As of January 1st 2023, there were +3.000 active users per month. The app is free to download and available in six languages.



Download the 'Liberation Route Europe' app via [the link](#) or the QR code.



Commemorate
the end of WWII
– 80 years later

europeremembers.com

39 45

EUROPE REMEMBERS

80 YEARS AFTER WWII

Introduction

In the years 2023, 2024 and 2025, Europe commemorates the 80th anniversary of the progressive end of the Nazi regime occupation. From the invasion of Sicily in July 1943 to the capitulation's signature on 8 May 1945, the liberation process took many forms but spread over most of the European continent. The Europe Remembers campaign is the initiative created by the LRE Foundation, in partnership with many international organisations, to contribute to this effort of commemoration and remembrance.

Progress made

Website

In 2023, a significant addition to the campaign was the launch of the Europe Remembers collaborative website. Serving as a key component of the initiative, this website aims to be the go-to platform for the public seeking information on events and remembrance sites across Europe, eliminating the challenge of navigating multiple sites and languages. Beyond showcasing a comprehensive overview of commemorations and exhibitions, the website offers a rich collection of inspiring content, including stories, remembrance sites, and news related to WWII memory and cultural heritage. Organizations have the autonomy to list their events on the website, while project partners receive a specialized landing page highlighting their initiatives and remembrance sites, which receive additional visibility on the platform.

Visual Identity

In the past two years, the campaign has made significant progress. The project's visual identity received a modern update by Brussels-based Studio Oilinwater. A fresh colour palette was introduced, combining the original blue with vibrant oranges for a distinct new look. The logo pin marker now plays a more central role and is utilised across various design elements. A brand book and communication kit were developed to guide project partners in effectively using the visual identity to promote local history and events.



Progress made

Partnerships

As Europe Remembers is a collaborative and international campaign, establishing partnerships with organizations across Europe is essential to its success. This year, substantial efforts were dedicated to introducing the campaign and its mission to stakeholders and organizations focused on remembrance throughout Europe. These initiatives have already yielded positive outcomes, leading to the formation of several key partnerships during the year. Additionally, this foundational work has set the stage for future collaborations, reinforcing a solid base for continuous growth and joint efforts.



Awareness Campaign

The campaign was officially launched in July 2023, coinciding with the commemorations for the 80th anniversary of the Allied landings in Sicily. The 9 July marked the significant milestone of 80 years since the Allied troops launched the landings in Sicily, signalling the start of the Italian campaign and the liberation of Europe from Nazi and Fascist control.

On the occasion of this historic event, the LRE Foundation was in Sicily, presenting the new Europe Remembers campaign in Licata and attending numerous commemorative events to create video reports of the remembrance programme.

Project outline & how to get involved

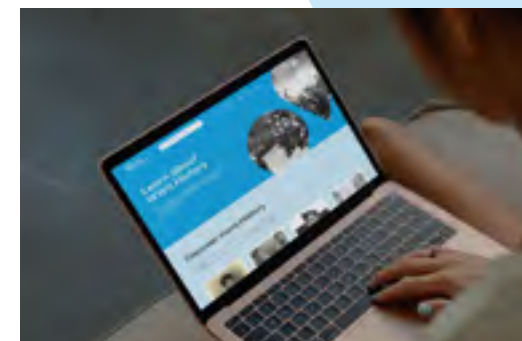
Europe Remembers is designed to raise awareness around the 80th anniversary of the end of the war and its commemorations. To achieve this mission Europe Remembers stands on three pillars:

Campaign Flexibility

The Europe Remembers basic concept is the flexibility of the brand. From the original logo, different aspects can be modified to better fit the geographical and historical scope of the partners' initiatives.

Online Platform

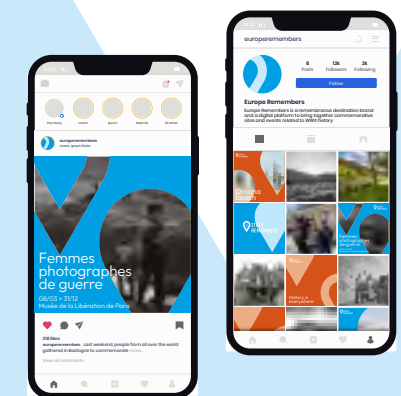
The project website europe remembers.com, available in 6 languages, is designed to promote events, destinations, and visits, as well as share stories. This is a collaborative environment for partners to contribute to and where they receive dedicated visibility.



Awareness campaign

An international marketing campaign is planned and executed to bring Europe Remembers' message to a wide audience across several countries. Activities include social media, online promotion, activation campaigns and video production.

The Europe Remembers initiative is led by the LRE Foundation, which invites all institutions involved in organising events or projects related to the 80th anniversary to participate. There are different possible roles and levels of involvement which can be discussed with the LRE Foundation team.



Projects & events



Resistance through their Eyes

Commenced with an impactful kick-off and Lyon seminar, the “Resistance through their Eyes” project, funded by the EU and co-organized by the LRE Foundation, the Resistance Museum (NL), the Home Army Museum (PL), the White Rose Foundation (DE), the City of Milan, and the Ferruccio Parri National Institute (IT), sheds light on diverse WWII resistance experiences.

The kick-off meeting, attended by partner representatives, outlined key stages of the project, emphasizing a shared mission to educate about young people involved in WWII resistance. The seminar, held in May 2023 at the Resistance Museum in Lyon, delved into the challenges and opportunities of studying and presenting resistance, fostering dialogue among historians and stakeholders. The ongoing discussions contributed to shaping a multi-perspective travelling exhibition as part of the project.



Persecution through their Eyes

Throughout 2023, all project youth events organized by partners of the EU-funded «Persecution through Their Eyes» project took place in four European countries.

Youth events, crucial in project implementation, empower young people by directly involving them in educational activities prepared by project partners. The Camp Vught (NL) event resulted in presentation of the project storybased animations created by Art Academy students. In Sant’Anna di Stazzema (IT), activities connected educational efforts with historical remembrance of the WWII civilian massacre. The Lublin (PL) event marked the 80th anniversary of Operation Reinhardt, adding insights of the contemporary war experiences. Finally, the Buchenwald (DE) event helped students understand the origins of extremist ideologies and recognize their modern-day threats. Each event, though distinct, shared a deep link between historical narratives and contemporary perspectives.



Outreach Events 2023

In 2023, the LRE Foundation held numerous outreach events all over Europe. The events took place in Krakow (Poland), Vogelsang (Germany), Portsmouth, Lincoln and London (UK), La Coupole (France) and Bastogne (Belgium), as well as in several locations in the Netherlands. Funded by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in the Hague, these get-togethers have helped the Foundation to reach out and interact with both regional and national history- and tourism stakeholders. This year’s events included a diverse repertoire of speakers, topics, and perspectives, providing a deep insight into the work of the LRE Foundation and the Liberation Route Europe project.

European Days of Jewish Culture 2023: Memory

The EU-funded “European Days of Jewish Culture 2023: Memory” project, aimed at fostering dialogue and preserving the Jewish heritage, sees active participation from the LRE Foundation by its implementation of two key project tasks.

The project commenced with a kick-off meeting in Paris in February 2023, attended by LREF representatives, establishing a platform for detailed discussions and planning collaborative remembrance activities for the year. The Foundation is deeply engaged in organizing a historical conference in the collaboration with the Schindler’s Factory in Krakow, designed to promote cross-cultural dialogue and tackle contemporary challenges in preserving WWII heritage. Simultaneously, the LREF team is actively involved in creating an exhibition centered on the liberation of concentration and extermination camps, planned for digital display on 27 January 2024, Holocaust Remembrance Day. For more information go to: <https://behind-barbed-wire.com/>

Freedom Ride

In early May 2023, almost a thousand cyclists celebrated peace and freedom. The Freedom Ride is an annual liberation festival by bike entirely dedicated to remembrance and celebration. From Apeldoorn, various routes led past important places in the war history of the Veluwe region. This edition paid special attention to the Razzia of Putten, the 1944 reprisal that left deep wounds in society. An impressive ceremony followed at the Oranje Barracks near Arnhem, where all participants laid flowers at the monument commemorating those who died in wars.

Event agency Central Events provided the organization in cooperation with Foundation for Appreciation and Recognition Police (WEP), Ministry of Defense, Netherlands Veterans Institute and LRE Foundation.

Activities from Foundation's national branches

LRE United Kingdom

Following on from a very productive previous year, the LRE UK has continued to increase visibility and awareness. Strong partnerships have emerged from more museums joining the network, alongside cooperation with walking and cycling organisations. More historical points of interest have been added to the hiking trails in Hampshire, Lincolnshire and London. This has enhanced opportunities for all to learn, understand and remember when exploring the history of the Second World War at these locations. As we approach the end of 2023, our focus is looking towards the 80th anniversary of the build-up to D-Day and the Normandy landings. We are working in partnership with numerous organisations to bring more themed walking trails. This will also include a multi-day expedition for young adults to take part in through the Duke of Edinburgh Award in the Hampshire area.

LRE Italy

For LRE Italy, 2023 was a year of great growth and the realisation of some major projects. We continued our recruitment for new members, which this year has led to have a total of 21 LRE Italy members, made up of Regions, large, small and medium-sized cities and Municipalities, Associations of Tourist Guides and Hikers, Research Centres, Museums and National Memorial Parks. The beginning of the year was dedicated to realising the LRE Foundation's Annual Forum in Florence, Tuscany, Italy. The event brought LRE members, tour operators, and journalists from the cultural tourism sector to our country and allowed our members to extend collaborations and deepen experiences with the partners of the international LRE network. In July, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the Landing in Sicily we contributed to the launch of the communication campaign Europe Remembers 80, in Licata, Sicily.



LRE Germany

Towards the end of 2023, LRE-Germany has been supporting the organisation of the LRE Forum 2024, which will take place in Aachen. Additionally, in 2023, LRE NRW and LRE Germany were involved in the creation of new content of the Liberation Route Europe project. This included 10 new audio spots, which enable the telling of new stories of the end of the war in the NRW region. Together with the Karlshorst Museum, LRE NRW and LRE Germany have also created an advertising flyer for the «History through their Eyes» exhibition, inviting schools throughout Germany to borrow the exhibition free of charge. Furthermore, a new board was elected for the association in October.

LRE France

Since its launch in January, LRE France has grown significantly in 2023! The French branch has been focused on developing the French network, forming new partnerships, raising awareness about our projects, and developing Liberation Route Europe in France. 6 new members have joined our network, bringing the total number of French members to 15. A scientific committee was set up in April, chaired by Olivier Wiewiorka. This committee supports the projects and strategy of the LRE France and will oversee the definition of the content to be created and will support with expertise as necessary. Several meetings were organised with various partners in France to present Liberation Route Europe. LRE France organized an outreach event in April in La Coupole to present Liberation Route Europe to the Northern France stakeholders. Other outreach events will be organized in other regions in 2024. The partnership with the French Federation of Hiking has also helped define the trails in Normandy, with the creation of new sections in the East of France and in Northern France. Work will continue in the other regions in 2024. A milestone was reached with the installation of the first French Vectors of Memory in Saint Raphaël in August, with the launch of a new French themed route "The Saint Raphaël Memory trail" in southern France.

Press & PR



Launch Event Bastogne

To mark the 79th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, the LREF in collaboration with the City of Bastogne and the Bastogne War Museum organised a Youth and Press Event on December 15, 2023. The event was dedicated to the launch of numerous new initiatives related to the Liberation Route Europe Project in Wallonia that were made possible through the support of the U.S. Embassy in Belgium and showcased the active participation of many students from the Henallux College. As part of the programme, students and press representatives could participate in walking tours through Bastogne, discovering the new routes and Vectors in and around the city. In the presence of Michael M. Adler, US Ambassador to Belgium, and Benoît Lutgen, Mayor of Bastogne, the event was concluded with a ceremony at the Bastogne City Hall dedicated to the launch of new themed routes, Vectors and the new podcast "In the Footsteps of History". In the presence of two veterans.



Press Trips

In late April and early May, the LRE Foundation, in collaboration with Eastbound PR's Bart Giepmans, organized two press trips to promote the Liberation Route Europe. Journalists from Germany, Denmark, the UK, Belgium, Spain, and the Netherlands participated in these journeys. The first trip explored D-Day-related sites in the UK and Normandy, concluding with a visit to Jersey. The second trip focused on the Luxembourg and Belgian Ardennes, highlighting sites connected to the Battle of the Bulge and concluding in Vogelsang and the Hürtgen Forest in Germany. Funded by the German Foreign Office, these trips aimed to raise awareness of the Liberation Route Europe project.

We express gratitude for the support of our partners throughout the trips, including museums and tourism boards of the visited regions. These press trips successfully resulted in numerous articles being generated by several international media outlets, introducing the Liberation Route Europe to a large audience.



Leeuwarden krijgt herdenkingsteken van Poolse architect: monument wordt onthuld op dag van de bevrijding

Aalng Walthaus - 9 april 2023, 16:52

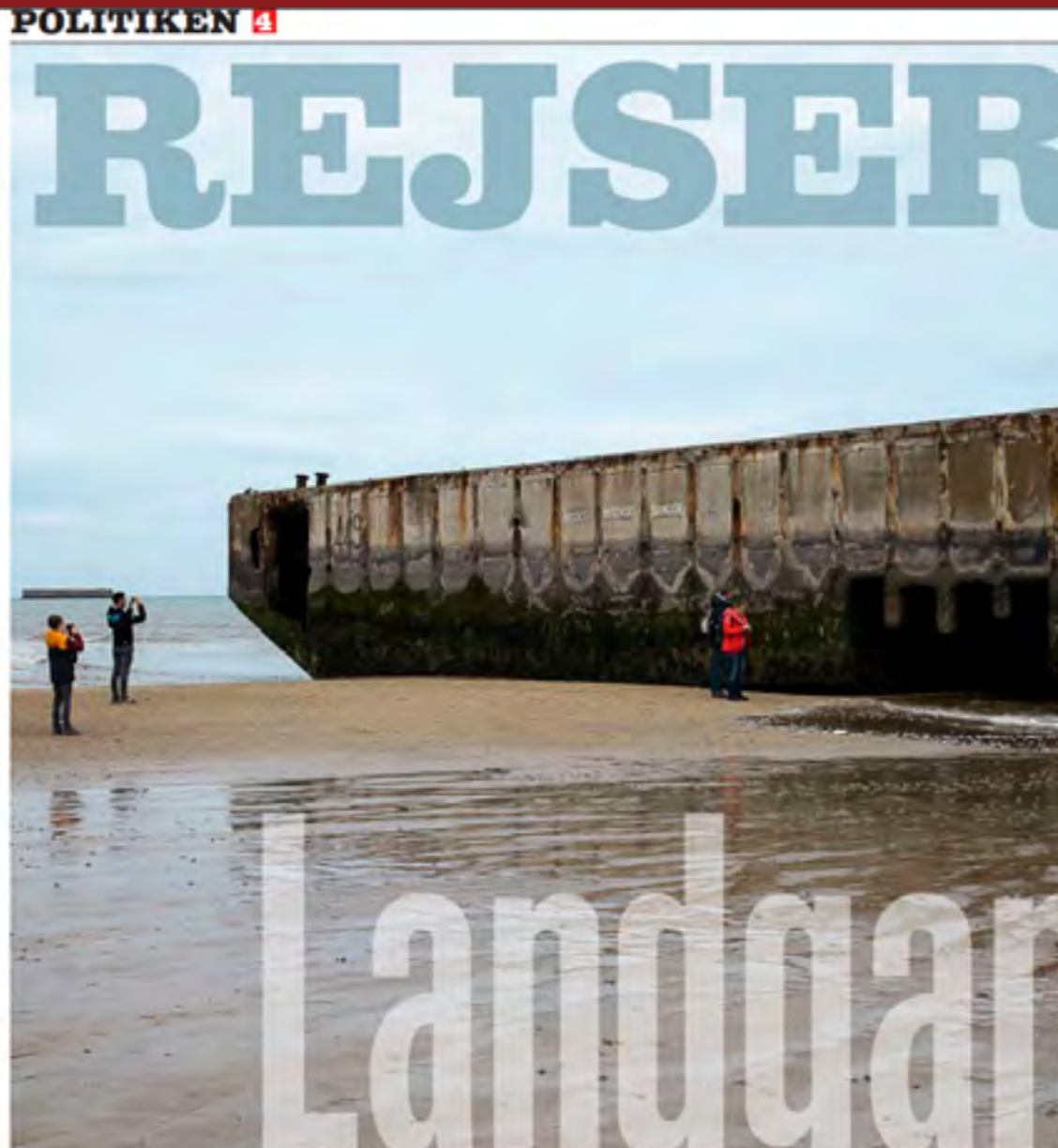
Doel dit artikel



Leopoldsburg opent twee nieuwe WO II-routes met museum Liberation Garden als ankerpunt

Het museum Liberation Garden in Leopoldsburg vormt vanaf nu het startpunt van een nieuwe WO II-route in de gemeente. "Vectors of Memory" zullen verschillende historische plekken in de gemeente markeren. Het museum vormt nu ook een ankerpunt in een internationale route tussen Londen en Berlijn.

Radio 2, Delta Filippone
27 jun 2023 20:19



I sporene af planlægningen af D-dag

6. juni 2024 er det 80 år siden, at allerede soldater landede i Normandiet og vendte Anden Verdenskrigs gang. Anstalter af historiske mindesmærker er overvekkende, og nu er der etableret i alt 30.000 kilometer vandreruter, der forbiholder mange af seværdighederne. Politiken er fulgt i sporene fra forberedelse i Sydengland, over Kanalen og gennem Normandiet.



Dette er en del af en artikel om D-dag og de historiske mindesmærker, der er opført i Normandiet. Det beskriver de mange kilometer vandreruter, der er etableret for at mindske de historiske steder og de mennesker, der har været involveret i de store begivenheder.



Denne tekst fortæller om de mange historiske steder og de mennesker, der har været involveret i de store begivenheder. Det beskriver de mange kilometer vandreruter, der er etableret for at mindske de historiske steder og de mennesker, der har været involveret i de store begivenheder.

HIKING INTO HISTORY: LIBERATION ROUTE EUROPE



by RAMY JAMES SALAMEH

Die Spuren des D-Day

Am 6. Juni jährt sich die Invasion der Alliierten in der Normandie. Die Liberation Route führt Besucher an die wichtigsten Orte.

Was ist die Liberation Route? Die Liberation Route führt Besucher an die wichtigsten Orte der Invasion der Alliierten in der Normandie am 6. Juni 1944. Die Route führt durch die Normandie, die Bretagne und die Niederlande. Sie verbindet die wichtigsten Orte der Invasion, die von der Normandie bis nach Berlin führen.



Die Fähr folgt dem Weg der britischen Armee an die Strände

Die Fähr folgt dem Weg der britischen Armee an die Strände. Die Fähr führt durch die Normandie, die Bretagne und die Niederlande. Sie verbindet die wichtigsten Orte der Invasion, die von der Normandie bis nach Berlin führen.



Liberation Route Europe, al via a Firenze il Forum internazionale 2023

La rete che valorizza la memoria della Seconda guerra mondiale si ritroverà dal 1 al 3 marzo in Toscana

Firenze e la Toscana si apprestano ad accogliere, dal primo al tre marzo 2023, il Forum internazionale di Liberation Route Europe. Alla Fondazione aderiscono 11 Paesi e oltre 400 soci da tutta l'Europa e dal Nord America per valorizzare la Memoria della Seconda guerra mondiale.

La Fondazione europea nata nel 2008 come un progetto locale in Olanda, mette in rete musei, luoghi, teatri di battaglia, monumenti, testimonianze di sopravvissuti per raccontare attraverso percorsi tematici, vivaci guidati, eventi e celebrazioni la Seconda guerra mondiale con uno sguardo originale e un approccio di respiro internazionale.

Ogni anno, la Fondazione LRE organizza il Forum, evento in cui riunisce membri, partner e parti interessate del turismo per approfondire le tematiche legate alla memoria in relazione all'attualità, ascoltare gli aggiornamenti di esperti, per fare rete e valorizzare anche la realtà turistica legata alla Memoria.

Travel trade

In 2023, the LRE Foundation continued to build strong relationships with the travel trade industry and the team attended several in-person events. The aim of this was to build and expand the Foundation's network of contacts in the industry, and to promote the Liberation Route Europe hiking and cycling trails as a sustainable touristic offer.

In 2023, the LREF Team attended the following events:

EUROPEAN TRAVEL MARKET

In March LREF participated in an online B2B networking event organised by the European Tourism Association (ETOA). This connected North American tour operators, wholesalers and travel advisors with European tourism suppliers and enabled LREF to hold meetings with 20 tour operators from Canada and the USA. The meetings were positive, showing interest in the Liberation Route Europe hiking trails and LREF's activities.



CYCLE SUMMIT 2023

In October, the LREF Team attended the biggest Cycle Summit event yet, in Riolo Terme (Italy). Hosted by Emilia Romagna Tourism, the LREF attended and met with more than 20 tour operators specialised in hiking and cycling tourism.



ETOA GEM

In November we attended the ETOA - European Tourism Association Global European Marketplace in London. This event provided a fantastic opportunity for us to connect with tour operators from Europe and North America, introducing them to the Liberation Route Europe network and hiking trails and inviting them to our annual LREXPO. We always enjoy participating in the ETOA because it provides a perfect opportunity to create visibility of our work, as well as that of our members and partners!



LREXPO

On 2 March 2023, the LREXPO took place in Florence, Tuscany (Italy), as part of the LRE Forum organised by the LRE Foundation and LRE Italy, with the contribution and patronage of Regione Toscana and Toscana Promozione Turistica. One-to-one networking appointments enabled Foundation members and partners to connect and showcase their destinations to international tour operators and travel trade stakeholders. A FAM trip for international tour operators was organised together with the European Travel Commission (co-funded by the European Union). 12 tour operators from the US and Canada continued the guided tour from Tuscany to Belgium and the Netherlands.

Guide network

In February, Guides from the LRE Network gathered in Dachau for a two-day workshop as part of the «Persecution Through Their Eyes» project. The initiative, involving international partners, focused on a multi-perspective approach to understanding persecution during World War II. The workshop aimed to enhance guiding skills in addressing sensitive topics, for example genocide, for young audiences. Participants learned from the experiences of remembrance sites and memorials, practised the creation of victim stories, and explored storytelling techniques. Following the amazing discussions and the input of the guides present, we have put together a guide handbook. This handbook is designed to provide the guides with the tools they need to approach the subject of persecution during the Second World War, with sensitivity, insight, and a deep understanding of its historical and contemporary significance. For the guide network, there have been online meetings throughout the year with guest speakers present.





The LRE Foundation’s annual event, the LRE Forum, took place in Florence from 28 February to 3 March 2023. The multi-day programme, organised in collaboration with LRE Italy, Region Tuscany and Toscana Promozione Turistica, successfully brought together the Foundation’s member network and more international stakeholders within the World War II remembrance sector.

The welcome event on 28 February officially kicked off the LRE Forum with speeches by the organisers and provided an informal platform for members and partners to come together.

On 1 March the Member Seminar began, serving as the yearly occasion for the LRE Foundation team to present the organisation’s projects, initiatives and governance. A thematic session on “The Future of the Past: Exploring the Diverse Challenges of World War II Memory in Europe” enriched the morning programme. In the afternoon, the LRE Conference commenced with a keynote by Georgiy Kasianov, Head of the Laboratory of International Memory Studies at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, on the use and abuse of WWII memory and its repercussions in the Ukraine region, Europe and globally. This was followed by a panel on the complex relationship between nationalism and WWII memory. The Conference, moderated by British author and historian Keith Lowe, then delved into the political pressures that museum curators and museologists face in framing WWII memory. The event was concluded with an interview with Katrin Himmler, Political Scientist and great-niece of the head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler.

In the evening, the Gala Dinner at Palazzo Borghese, one of Florence’s beautiful palace halls, provided the perfect setting for the Welcome Ceremony of new members of the Foundation’s network.

On 2 March, the LRE Forum 2023 continued with its annual thematic trade show, the LREXPO, offering Foundation members and partners an opportunity to engage and showcase their destinations to international tour operators and travel trade stakeholders. Site visits and a FAM Trip to some of the most iconic sites along the Liberation Route Europe in Tuscany, Netherlands and Belgium organised in collaboration with Toscana Promozione Turistica and the European Travel Commission wrapped up the 2023 programme.

New Members 2023

ITALY



Unione dei Comuni dell'Appenino Bolognese



Provincia di Lucca



Ecomuseo Casilino "ad Duae Lauros"



Unione dei Comuni della Romagna Faentina



Istituto storico della Resistenza e dell'età contemporanea in provincia di Pistoia



Fondazione Nuto Revelli



Comune di Molazzana

GERMANY



Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge

UNITED KINGDOM



Cranwell Aviation Heritage Museum



Lincolnshire Ramblers

FINLAND

Centre of War and Peace Muisti Ltd.



NETHERLANDS

Provincie Friesland



BELGIUM

Maison du Tourisme de la Forêt de Saint-Hubert



SPAIN

European Observatory on Memories



FRANCE

D-Day Museum Arromanches



Airborne Museum in Sainte-Mère-Église



Communauté de Communes Interrégionale Aumale-Blangy sur Bresle



Var Département



Musée de la Résistance Limoges



Website



The LRE Foundation website reflects the organization's identity while offering an in-depth overview of the Foundation's activities and projects. In 2023, we have added over forty new articles to the newsroom and implemented project pages to share the latest information about the Foundation's network, branches, and projects.

www.lre-foundation.org

WEBSITE INSIGHTS



12K + UNIQUE VISITORS IN 2023

Newsletters



The LRE Foundation newsletter provides an overview of the Foundation's activities and updates. It is a must-read for LREF Members and Partners, as well as anybody interested in our work and projects.

NEWSLETTER INSIGHTS



20 K + EMAILS SENT IN 2023

4K + CONTACTS

6 NEWSLETTERS PER YEAR



Sign up for the ['LRE Foundation' newsletter](#) via the link or QR code.

Social Media

The Foundation maintains a strong presence on social media platforms, particularly on LinkedIn and X. These platforms serve as effective tools for keeping our network consistently informed about the progress of our activities, projects and collaborations.

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS



3.157 (+1.8%)



1.247 (+1.3%)

2024 Preview



In the coming year, we will work with members and governments to develop the Liberation Route Europe hiking and cycling trails and to expand the LRE Network into new regions.

Persecution & Resistance through their Eyes

As we approach 2024, we finalize the “Persecution through their Eyes” project, and move forward with the ongoing “Resistance through their Eyes” initiative.

The LRE Forum 2024 will host a concluding conference for the “PTTE” project, exploring topics related to the memory of persecution. Additionally, the “Resistance through their Eyes” project will continue with the organization of a guide workshop in Austria, along with four youth events in Amsterdam, Milan, Munich, and Krakow, featuring the presentation of the project exhibition in both print and online formats.

LRE Poland

LRE Poland, set to launch in 2024 as the national branch of the LRE Foundation, strives to emphasize awareness of WWII and post-war events in Poland.

The brand new organization will concentrate on varied educational and cultural projects to effectively engage its target audience. Prioritizing a multiperspective approach, it aims to establish a dynamic network of committed members and partners, developing memory-focused initiatives. The essential goal is to highlight the impact of historical events on both Poland and Europe.

Forum 2024

Following the success of the LRE Forum 2023 in Florence, we are pleased to announce that the LRE Forum 2024, organized by the LRE Foundation along with LRE Germany and LRE NRW, will be held from 26-29 February in Aachen, Germany. With its rich history and significance during WWII, Aachen is the ideal setting for the LRE Foundation’s annual gathering.

Active Remembrance Youth Programme

The Active Remembrance Youth Programme (ARYP) has been awarded a grant by the European Commission. Over the course of two years, starting in 2024, the project aims to inspire and engage young Europeans, specifically 250+ individuals aged 18-25, coming from at least nine countries, in an active exploration and remembrance of World War II, and its different layers.

REFOOT

REFOOT is an EU-funded project which will see the development of a transnational hiking trail retracing the footsteps of Canadian soldiers who liberated Europe during World War II. The project seeks to promote sustainable tourism and preserve historical memory while contributing to the development of a more inclusive society in the North West Europe area.

The LRE Foundation is delighted to introduce four new members to its Historical Advisory Board: Dr. Mirco Carrattieri, Keith Lowe, Dr. Claire Miot and Prof. Joanna Wojdon. The four new historians from different countries and backgrounds, share distinguished careers in WWII memory transmission and remembrance.

The Historical Advisory Board, comprised of leading historians, works to define the Foundation's historical scope and supervises the content and research development. Together with the International Supervisory Board, which oversees the organisation's administration, this body holds a crucial role in the LRE Foundation and its activities.

New Historical Advisory Board Members

Dr. Mirco Carrattieri

Dr. Mirco Carrattieri (Reggio Emilia, Italy - 1974) collaborates with the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. He coordinates the Scientific Committee of Liberation Route Italia. He is a member of the Scientific Committee of the Cervi Institute and of Istoreco Reggio Emilia, of which he was president from 2009 to 2015. He was editor of the magazine «E-Review» from 2013 to 2022; director of the Museum of the Republic of Montefiorino and of the Italian Resistance from 2016 to 2019; director of the Ferruccio Parri National Institute from 2018 to 2021. He obtained a PhD in Contemporary History in Bologna and then he was a research fellow there. He was curator of exhibitions and project manager of digital products. His main interests are history of historiography, history of the Resistance and public history.



Keith Lowe

Keith Lowe is a British writer and historian. He has written several major historical books such as *Inferno*, *Savage Continent* and *The Fear and the Freedom*, all of which deal with the Second World War and its aftermath. His latest book, *Prisoners of History*, examines our monuments to the war and asks what they are really saying about our history and ourselves. Lowe regularly speaks on TV and radio, and he often lectures on postwar history at venues across Europe and North America. He has written for a variety of newspapers and journals, including the Daily Telegraph, The Times and The Wall Street Journal.

The Members' Council



Dr. Claire Miot

Dr. Claire Miot is a lecturer in contemporary history at Sciences Po Aix. She is the author of *The First French Army, from Provence to Germany (1944-1945)* published by Perrin in 2021. She co-edited, with Guillaume Piketty and Thomas Vaisset, *Militaires en résistances en France et en Europe* published by Presses du Septentrion in 2020, as well as, with Thomas Vaisset and Paul Vo-Ha, *Cessation of fire, cessation of fighting? De l'époque moderne à nos jours*, published by Presses du Septentrion in 2022. Her work focuses on the history of conflicts in the 20th century, and more particularly on the movement of soldiers from colonial and imperial armies. She is also interested in the history of Western military institutions in the 20th century and in particular in the question of their feminisation.



The LRE Members' Council has been created in 2023 and held its founding meeting in October. This new Council is an advisory body of the LRE Foundation, established by the Supervisory Board. It aims to give the Foundation's members a representation in the organisation's decision-making process, give feedback on current programs, contribute to strategies and conceptualize common projects. It is aimed to be composed by two representatives per country in which the LRE Foundation has members. The first fifteen members met in October to set the grounds of this new body, its structure and scope, as well as discussing concrete activities. The Council will meet at least once a year in person prior to the LRE Forum.

Prof. Joanna Wojdon

Prof. Joanna Wojdon of the University of Wrocław is vice-chair of the Migration Research Committee and a member of the Committee on Historical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences, as well as a member of the PAU Commission for the Study of the Polish Diaspora. Since 2014, she has coordinated Poland's pioneering master's degree program in history in public space.

Prof. Wojdon has participated in many international projects on history teacher education. She has developed online teaching materials, including the Teaching for Multiethnicity package and an alternative textbook for the new grade IV elementary school. In cooperation with Euroclio, the European Association of History Educators, she initiated a project to translate teaching materials for elementary school into Ukrainian.



Team



Managing Director
Rémi Praud
 r.praud@liberationroute.com



Project Officer
Emerald Johnson
 e.johnson@liberationroute.com



Digital Manager
Loïc François
 l.francois@liberationroute.com



Communications Manager
Cecilia Badano
 c.badano@liberationroute.com



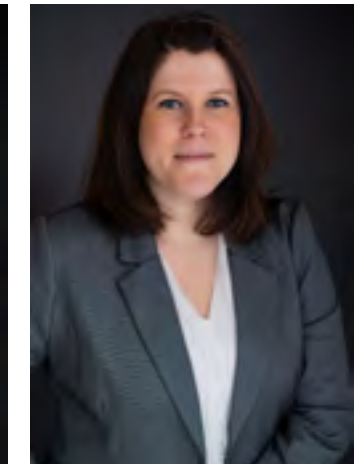
Managing Director Italy
Carlo Puddu
 c.puddu@liberationroute.com



Managing Director United Kingdom
Ben Mayne
 b.mayne@liberationroute.com



Managing Director NRW
Gotthard Kirch
 gotthard.kirch@web.de



Managing Director France
Isabelle Lebreton
 i.lebreton@liberationroute.com



Program Manager
Peter Kruk
 p.kruk@liberationroute.com



Press & Communications Advisor
Gert-Jan Jacobs
 gj.jacobs@liberationroute.com



Project Manager
Joël Stoppels
 j.stoppels@liberationroute.com



Communications Assistant
Viola Scallaci
 v.scallaci@liberationroute.com



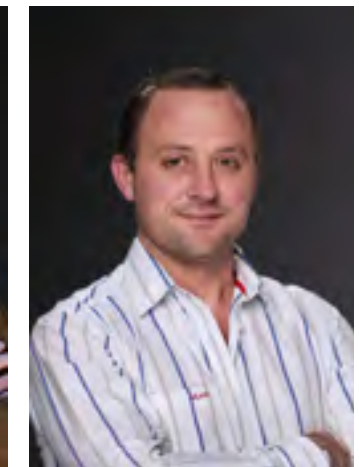
Executive Marketing Manager Italy
Katia Gerunda
 k.gerunda@liberationroute.com



Project Manager
Joanna Roman
 j.roman@liberationroute.com



Project Officer
Wout van Aalst
 w.vanaalst@liberationroute.com



Finance Manager
Conrad Strauss
 c.strauss@liberationroute.com



info@liberationroute.com
www.lre-foundation.org

The Netherlands

Jansbuitensingel 30
6811 AE, Arnhem
+31 (0) 30 200 6834

Belgium

131 Rue de Stassart
1050 Brussels
+32 (0) 25800733

Italy

Via Pascoli, 46
55100 Lucca

Germany

Museum Berlin-Karlshorst
Zwieseler Str. 4, 10318 Berlin

United Kingdom

71 Queen Victoria St.
London EC4V 4AY

France

Région Normandie – Service Tourisme
Abbaye-aux-Dames
Pl. Reine Mathilde CS 50523
14035 Caen

